

Refugee Settlement Support Project Findings

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Outline

- Project overview
- Project outputs
- Research methodology
- Research findings
- Recommendations
- Next steps



Project overview

- 5-month pilot project funded by IRCC
- Challenges related to Syrian refugee arrivals in Ontario



Research

- Needs/opportunities: information, resources, training



Outreach

- LIPs, related projects



Resource collection and development

- Online space, Arabic translations

Project outputs

- **“Working with Refugees”** resource library for settlement workers on WelcomeOntario.ca
 - Inquiry form for questions about serving refugees
- **Final report** to IRCC



Research methodology

2 focus groups

- 16 settlement workers from across Ontario
- 11 settlement workers in Peel region



4 key informant interviews

- 2 settlement agencies, OCASI and RSTP



1 online survey

- 182 respondents from across Ontario



Community meetings

- LIPs, Southern Ontario Sponsors Group



Research findings

Two main types of challenges for frontline providers:

- 1. Settlement needs of clients**
- 2. Barriers, structural limitations and gaps** affecting settlement work



Settlement needs of clients

Differ depending on:

- Level of English **language** proficiency
- Level of **education**
- **Resettlement stream** (PSR/GAR/BVOR)



Biggest overall challenge:

- Lack of English language proficiency and/or literacy in native language combined with low educational level

Top 5 challenges for refugees

1. Language/interpretation
2. Amount of financial support
3. Helping those left behind
4. Finding affordable housing
5. Finding employment



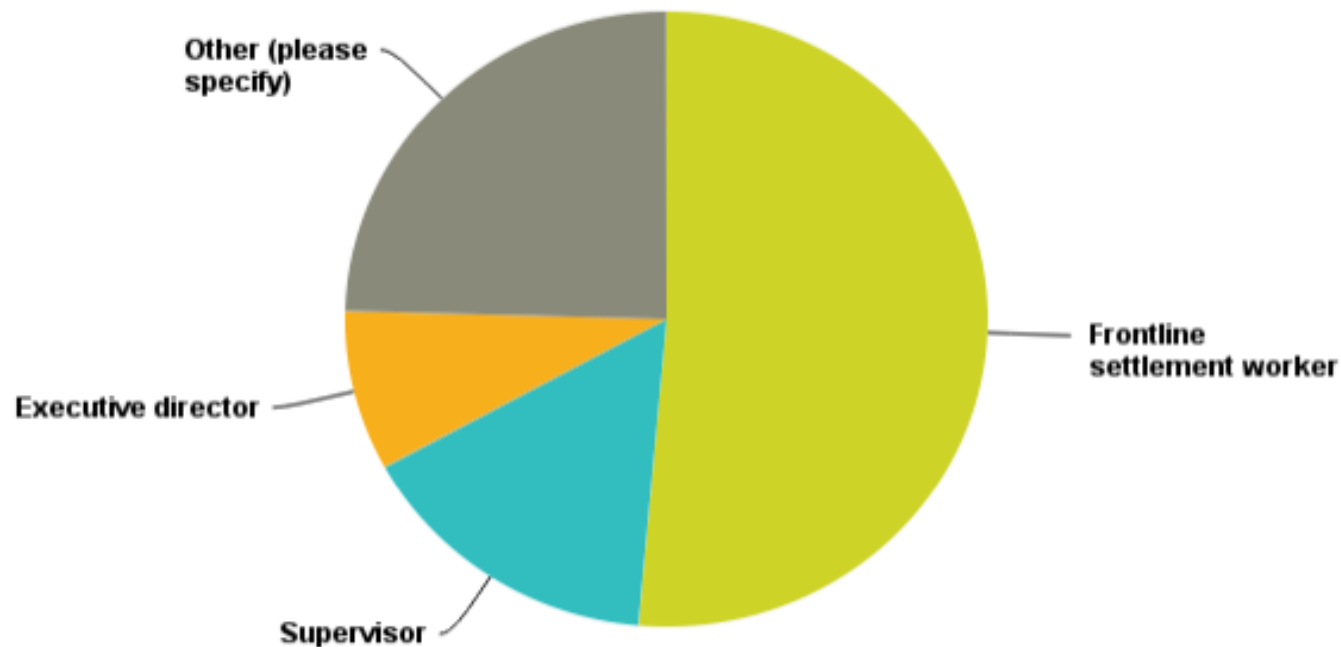
Challenges for frontline providers

- Volume of arrivals
- Lack of in-depth knowledge on resettlement streams
- Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities
- Limited best practices and knowledge sharing
- Insufficient cross-sectoral coordination
- Resource deficiencies



Online survey: Respondents

- Geared toward frontline settlement workers
- 182 responses (51% frontline settlement workers)



Online survey: PD

Topics

1. **Serving clients with mental health issues** (65%)
2. Avoiding burnout (57%)
3. Understanding/helping clients access government services (48%)
4. Rights and responsibilities of sponsored refugees, sponsors (35%)
5. Differences between refugee resettlement streams (34%)
6. Sponsorship disputes and breakdown (32%)

Format

1. **In-person workshop** (74% ranked as first choice)
2. Webinars
3. Facilitated online course
4. Self-directed online course (by far least popular)



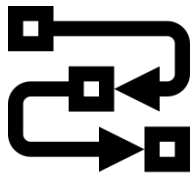
Recommendations



Community of Practice



Training priorities



System improvements

Community of Practice

“A community of practice is a group of people who **share a concern or a passion for something they do, and **learn how to do it better** as they **interact regularly**.”** – Étienne Wenger

- Discussions
- Information sharing
- Best practices



Training priorities

“Ongoing professional development opportunities for settlement workers [will] ensure they have the latest information and resources to deliver effective, efficient settlement services.”

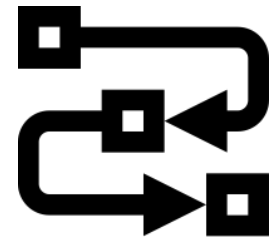
- Combination of in-person and other formats to balance settlement workers’ preference with financial constraints



System improvements

“Increased coordination and information sharing is needed not just in the settlement sector but also with all service agencies relevant to newcomer settlement.”

- Leverage **Local Immigration Partnerships** to increase sharing of up-to-date information with service providers across sectors



In a nutshell...

Resettling a **high number of refugees** in a **short time** highlighted **pre-existing gaps and limitations** in the settlement sector.

To strengthen the sector and maximize refugee resettlement outcomes, **up-to-date information**, **proportional resources** and **cross-sectoral collaboration** are vital.



Next steps

- 6-month project extension (September 2017)
- **Webinar series: Best Practices**
 - Working with sponsors - May 11
 - How to handle a client's disclosure of domestic violence - May 23
 - Creative approaches in under-resourced areas - June 8
 - Avoiding burnout (TBA)
 - Cross-sectoral collaboration (TBA)
- Peer consultation webinar (to be piloted)
- Roundtable discussion between sponsors and service providers
- OCASI frontline conference (October 2017)





Questions?